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DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2017 7:00 AM EST

TODAY'S TABLE OF CONTENTS

Administrator

- [Senate Dems Hold Unofficial Hearing On Pruitt. \(EEDAY\)](#)
- [WTimes Analysis: Trump, Not Cabinet Or Lawmakers, To Set Environmental Agenda. \(WT\)](#)
- [Additional Reading.](#)
 - [EPA Democrats Talk To Themselves In Anti-Pruitt Forum. \(EECLMTWR\)](#)
 - [California Eyes Climate Leadership Role, But Trump's EPA Holds A Key On Cars. \(NPR\)](#)
 - [Op-Ed: EPA Pick Shows Trump Doesn't Care Much For Detroiters. \(FREEP\)](#)

Brownfields/Superfund/Other Cleanups

- [Kalamazoo River Clean-Up Not Expected To Be Interrupted By EPA Freeze. \(MLIVE\)](#)

Budget

- [State Officials Brace For EPA Funding Freeze. \(DENP, OREG, CAPGAZ, MLIVE\)](#)

Climate Change

- [Trump Energy Policies Unlikely To Impact Global Emissions Curbing Efforts. \(REU\)](#)

Energy

- [BP Energy Outlook: Global Demand Will Slacken, Sparking Fight For Market Share. \(WSJ, FT, REU, BLOOM, FUELFIX\)](#)
- [EDF Study Says Green Jobs Are Plentiful, High Paying. \(HILL\)](#)
- [Additional Reading.](#)
 - [Environmental Activists Prep for Battle as Trump Pushes Energy Projects. \(BLOOMPOL\)](#)

Enforcement

- [EPA Official Says VW Diesel Scandal Key To Deterring Future Emission Scandals. \(REU\)](#)

International

- [Additional Reading.](#)
 - [Denmark to Cut Green Subsidies as Wind Reveals Competitive Edge. \(BLOOM\)](#)

Other News

- [Administration Backs Away From Plan To Remove Climate Data From EPA Website. \(WP, HILL, NYT, HUFFPOST, REU\)](#)
 - [Transition Official Says Work By EPA Scientists May Be Reviewed By Trump Team. \(NPR, REU, SLTRIB\)](#)
- [Federal Employees Set Up "Rogue" Twitter Accounts. \(WT\)](#)
 - [Death Valley National Park's Tweets Sets Off Social Media Stir. \(LAT\)](#)
 - [Badlands Tweets On Climate Change Deleted.](#)
- [Scientists Begin Planning March On Washington After Backlash Over Media Blackout. \(HILL, TIME\)](#)
 - [New Science Organization Seeks To Support Scientist Running For Office. \(CSM\)](#)
- [Civil Servants Engaging In Digital Backlash Against Trump Administration. \(AP, WP, SACBEE, USAT, BOSGLOBE\)](#)
 - [WPost: How Government Workers Can Leak Documents. \(WP\)](#)
 - [WTimes: "Bureaucratic Partisanship" Will Backfire. \(WT\)](#)

Rules/Regulations/Policy

- [Biofuel Credits Drop On Uncertainty, EPA Reaffirms RFS A Priority. \(REU\)](#)

- Additional Reading.
- House Prepares To Kill Coal, Methane Rules. (GWIRE)

Water

- Flint Outlines Plans to Upgrade Water Infrastructure. (MLIVE)

Administrator

Senate Dems Hold Unofficial Hearing On Pruitt.

E&E Daily (1/26, Bogardus) reports that on Wednesday, Senate Democrats held their own “unofficial” hearing on President Trump’s nominee for EPA administrator, Scott Pruitt. Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) led the meeting, during which senators “heard from witness after witness who took shots at the Oklahoma Republican general’s environmental record.” The meeting was quickly condemned by Senate Republicans, who said Pruitt deserved a “swift confirmation.”

WTimes Analysis: Trump, Not Cabinet Or Lawmakers, To Set Environmental Agenda.

The Washington Times (1/25, Wolfgang) reports “top Republicans are shifting the climate change debate away from the human role and toward a more pragmatic discussion” on the potential actions the government can take, but “it’s increasingly clear” that President Trump – rather than his Cabinet or lawmakers – “will be setting the environmental agenda.” The Times says that Trump is “now the nation’s foremost climate change skeptic” and “seems to be at odds” with Energy Secretary nominee Rick Perry, EPA Administrator nominee Scott Pruitt, and Interior Secretary nominee Ryan Zinke “on the science of global warming.” Analysts, according to the Times, say that while the three nominees told Senate panels last week that they believe climate change is real and human actions have contributed to it, “analysts say that their opinions matter little.”

Additional Reading.

- **EPA Democrats Talk To Themselves In Anti-Pruitt Forum.** ClimateWire. (1/25, Heikkinen)
- **California Eyes Climate Leadership Role, But Trump’s EPA Holds A Key On Cars.** NPR. (1/25)
- **Op-Ed: EPA Pick Shows Trump Doesn’t Care Much For Detroiters.** Detroit Free Press. (1/26)

Brownfields/Superfund/Other Cleanups

Kalamazoo River Clean-Up Not Expected To Be Interrupted By EPA Freeze.

MLive (MI) (1/25) reports that the EPA-supervised clean-up of the Kalamazoo River will continue despite the freeze on “new contracts or grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.” On-site coordinator for the project, Paul Ruesch, noted that the project will not be in jeopardy because the “paper companies responsible for the pollution” are funding the clean up. The latest stage in the clean-up began on Monday, which covers the portion of the river near the Ostego Township Dam.

Budget

State Officials Brace For EPA Funding Freeze.

The Denver Post (1/25, Finley) reports that EPA regional staffers in Colorado are concerned what the order to freeze EPA funding for grants and cleanup work will mean for their mandate to protect

air and water. A staffer for US Rep. Scott Tipton said he had “received assurances” that work around the Gold King Mine will continue.

The Oregonian (1/25) reports that Oregon’s congressional Democrats sent President Trump a letter on Wednesday expressing their “serious concerns” about his freeze on EPA grants, “while also asking the president to allow agency staff to speak with the media and respond to Congressional inquiries.”

The Annapolis (MD) Capital Gazette (1/26, Cook) reports that the Chesapeake Bay Trust, which has received nearly \$190,000 in EPA funding over the last five years for its environmental projects, is requesting clarification from the federal government on how the EPA grant freeze will impact pollution clean-up and infrastructure projects.

MLive (MI) (1/25) reports that about 30 people rallied outside the Flint Federal Building and US Courthouse to protest the city’s water crisis and the Trump administration’s recent freeze on EPA grants and contract spending. Federal lawmakers had already approved \$100 million in funding to address the city’s water issues, and the EPA has assured city and state officials that “it will make federal funds available by using an existing framework for funding Drinking Water State Revolving Fund applications.”

Climate Change

Trump Energy Policies Unlikely To Impact Global Emissions Curbing Efforts.

Reuters (1/25) reports BP’s chief economist said on Wednesday that the Trump administration’s energy policies are unlikely significantly impact global efforts to curb emissions. “The actual implications of change in U.S. policy are unlikely to be a big game changer,” Spencer Dale told journalists in London. “The U.S. has played an enormous leadership role together with China in galvanizing international support (for action on climate change) Much of that improvement in the outlook for carbon emissions isn’t happening in America.”

Energy

BP Energy Outlook: Global Demand Will Slacken, Sparking Fight For Market Share.

The Wall Street Journal (1/25, Kent) reports BP said Wednesday that global demand will slacken in the coming decades, but supplies will remain abundant. This highlights the possibility that big producers will resume their fight for market share. BP’s annual energy outlook says that collaboration between oil-producing countries could be short-lived as the countries shift strategies to cope with less demand. BP predicted that oil-demand growth will be down 60 percent from 2015 to 2035. This could leave oil stranded in the ground while producers fight for market share in a low price environment. The Financial Times (1/25, Ward) reports BP said there will be double the amount of technically recoverable oil available that the world is expected to need between now and 2050. Reuters (1/25, Bousso) reports that BP said demand will grow into the 2040s because of higher consumption of plastic goods, even if the electric vehicle fleet expands and technology alters transportation. BP also predicted that carbon emissions will slow well in excess of goals set by governments to fight global warming. Technological shifts such as car sharing and self-driving vehicles will increase car usage, but reduce the overall number of vehicles needed. BP expects renewable sources of energy to quadruple, with non-fossil fuels providing half of the increase in energy consumption. Gas is expected to grow faster than oil or coal, at an annual rate of 1.6 percent. Bloomberg News (1/25, Katakey) quotes BP’s Chief Economist Spencer Dale saying, “The most important source of growth in oil demand in the 2030s won’t be to power cars or trucks

or planes, but rather used as an input into other products, such as plastics and fabrics.” BP said demand for oil will increase at an average annual rate of 0.7 percent a year, little more than half the rate in the last 20 years. [Fuel Fix \(TX\)](#) (1/25) reports despite the fact that global carbon emissions are set to fall sharply, the world will fall far short of the 2015 Paris climate goals, according to BP’s Energy Outlook. The mere fact that emissions will still be growing by 2035 indicates the world will not meet the goals for 2035. BP CEO Bob Dudley said that in order to meet the Paris goals, more government intervention and policies are needed. Dudley said, “In BP, we continue to believe that carbon pricing has an important part to play as it provides incentives for everyone — producers and consumers alike — to play their part.” BP has supported carbon taxes as it attempts to push the global market towards natural gas, in which the oil company has invested heavily.

EDF Study Says Green Jobs Are Plentiful, High Paying.

[The Hill](#) (1/25, Cama, Henry) reports a study released by the Environmental Defense Fund has found that the green energy industry “accounts for as many as to 4.5 million jobs, up from 3.4 million five years ago.” The study contends that the jobs are abundant “and high-paying, and the industry is due to grow as renewable energy expands.” The Hill adds that “an economic fight over the makeup of the energy sector — fossil fuels on one side and renewable energy on the other — is possible under the Trump administration,” meaning there will “be more studies like this in the years ahead.”

Additional Reading.

- **Environmental Activists Prep for Battle as Trump Pushes Energy Projects.** [Bloomberg Politics](#). (1/25)

Enforcement

EPA Official Says VW Diesel Scandal Key To Deterring Future Emission Scandals.

[Reuters](#) (1/25, Shepardson) reports that Christopher Grundler, director of EPA’s office of Transportation and Air Quality, told reporters that the criminal indictment of seven executives related to the Volkswagen diesel scandal has sent a “very strong deterrent” to cheat to other automakers. Grundler “said aggressive enforcement is key to automakers complying with emission rules,” and that his team plans to brief EPA Administrator-designate Scott Pruitt “on the work we did.”

International

Additional Reading.

- **Denmark to Cut Green Subsidies as Wind Reveals Competitive Edge.** [Bloomberg News](#). (1/24, Levring)

Other News

Administration Backs Away From Plan To Remove Climate Data From EPA Website.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/25, Dennis, Eilperin) reports that the Trump Administration “backed away” from its plans to remove some climate change information from the EPA website. EPA “beachhead

team” spokesman Doug Ericksen told The Hill (1/25, Cama) Wednesday “that officials are reviewing all ‘editorial’ parts of the EPA’s website and discussing possible changes, not necessarily looking to take down all climate data.” Ericksen’s comments come after reports “began to surface that members of the Trump administration team working at the agency had instructed EPA staffers to remove the climate change page from its website.” The New York Times (1/25, Davenport) quotes an anonymous EPA official who said, “This is standard practice.”

The Huffington Post (1/25) reports that the Office of General Counsel “will review the implications of removing the website’s content.”

Reuters (1/25) reports that last week EPA transition lead Myron Ebell “said he expected the climate page to eventually be taken down, but that the ‘links and information will be available.’”

Transition Official Says Work By EPA Scientists May Be Reviewed By Trump Team. In an interview with NPR, (1/25) Ericksen said that EPA scientists who want to publish or present their scientific findings will need to have their work first reviewed on a “case by case basis” before it is disseminated. Such a policy would “directly contradict the agency’s current scientific integrity policy, which was published in 2012” and prohibits “Agency leadership from suppressing, altering, or otherwise impeding the timely release of scientific findings or conclusions.” Reuters (1/25) quoted Erickson as saying, “We’ll take a look at what’s happening so that the voice coming from the EPA is one that’s going to reflect the new administration.” The Salt Lake (UT) Tribune (1/25) provides additional coverage.

Federal Employees Set Up “Rogue” Twitter Accounts.

The Washington Times (1/25, Wolfgang) reports that @AltNatParkSer, a Twitter account which claims to be run by a “resistance team” of National Park Service employees “tweeting during their off-work hours” has “begun tweeting about climate change and blasting the president for his reported attempts to clamp down on social media use by government agencies.” A tweet from the account on Wednesday read, “Can’t wait for President Trump to call us FAKE NEWS. You can take our official twitter, but you’ll never take our free time!” The Times says it is “unclear whether the account is actually being run by Park Service employees, though the owner of the page has claimed that’s the case.”

E&E (1/25) reports that its third tweet summarized the purpose: “Mr Trump, you may have taken us down officially. But with scientific evidence & the Internet our message will get out.”

Death Valley National Park’s Tweets Sets Off Social Media Stir. The Los Angeles Times (1/25, Serna) report that “a series of messages from Death Valley National Park’s official Twitter feed set off a flurry of social media activity Wednesday when users assumed the posts were meant to be taken as commentary on President Trump.” According to the article, “the three posts Wednesday morning addressed internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and appeared hours after news broke that Trump was mulling a ban on the admission of Syrian refugees and restrictions on travel from several majority-Muslim nations.” However, “park officials Tuesday insisted that the tweets were not politically motivated.”

Badlands Tweets On Climate Change Deleted. E&E (1/25) reports that for a few hours Tuesday, Badlands National Park “became a Twitter sensation for seeming to ‘go rogue’ when it posted a series of climate-change-related tweets.” But “just after 5 p.m. EST, @BadlandsNPS deleted its tweets, including one noting the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was ‘higher than any other time in the last 650,000 years. #climate.’” A National Park Service official said the tweets “were posted by a former employee who was not currently authorized to use the park’s account.”

Scientists Begin Planning March On Washington After Backlash Over Media Blackout.

The Hill (1/25, Firozi) reports that the size of the Women's March on Washington and a Trump administration communications crackdown has prompted several scientists to begin organizing their own march on Washington. A Twitter account (@ScienceMarchonDC) that started on Monday "has periodically sent out updates and requests for people to get involved." The march is intended to be a "starting point to take a stand for science in politics," reads a website statement. "Slashing funding and restricting scientists from communicating their findings (from tax-funded research!) with the public is absurd and cannot be allowed to stand as policy." TIME (1/25) also reports.

New Science Organization Seeks To Support Scientist Running For Office. The Christian Science Monitor (1/25, Reilly) reports since November, scientists "have watched the incoming Trump administration with growing alarm." More and more scientists are asking themselves how they will save Federal science programs. For some, "the answer has been: by running for office themselves." A new organization called 314 Action "aims to support scientists in state and Congressional races." On March 14, 314 Action "will hold an online information session for scientists interested in running for office." To gain 314 Action's support, "these candidates will need to agree to back funding for greater research into climate change and alternative energy, both of which appear on 314 Action's 'Issues' page." The group "also calls for investment in STEM education, and the repeal of a 1996 law that prohibits the Centers for Disease Control from researching gun violence."

Civil Servants Engaging In Digital Backlash Against Trump Administration.

The AP (1/25, Lerer, Bykowicz) reports that in response to a President Trump's hiring freeze for federal agencies and a communications blackout, "some official social media accounts have tweeted out messages decidedly at odds with his agenda and leaks are flowing into newsrooms from across the federal government." The AP reports it will be "tricky for the White House to plug all the possible leaks or to stop public outbursts" amid an "unprecedented digital insurrection." The AP notes tweets and leaks from various agencies, including DOE and DOD, and reports "most of the resistance is coming from agencies with a focus on environmental protection and scientific research." The Washington Post (1/25, Fears, Epstein) further reports on the internet backlash over the Trump administration's communications restrictions and "rogue" National Park Service Twitter activity. The Sacramento (CA) Bee (1/25, Irby) reports "USDA confirmed the gag order was sent out, but then lifted the ban Tuesday evening following public outcry, BuzzFeed reported." Unnamed EPA sources told Reuters that the Trump administration told them to scrub environmental information from the agency website on Tuesday. USA Today (1/25, Rossman) and the Boston Globe (1/25, McGrane) also report.

WPost: How Government Workers Can Leak Documents. Given the Trump Administration's "unwillingness to accept demonstrated points of data and with the government's existing efforts to tamp down on leakers," the Washington Post (1/25, Bump) reports on how government employees can leak documents to the newspaper. The article links to a tool called SecureDrop and offers tips such as using the Tor browser on a non-government computer in a public WiFi spot. The Post receives help in explaining how to leak documents from Trevor Timm of the Freedom of the Press Foundation. While Timm is "quick to note that leaking government documents is extremely risky," the Post concludes, "Sometimes...the need to ensure public awareness of information makes that risk worth taking."

WTimes: "Bureaucratic Partisanship" Will Backfire. Kelly Riddell writes for the Washington Times (1/25) that "mainstream media reporters have taken to social media to recruit federal employees to leak to them." Riddell writes that she supports whistleblowers "exposing

corruption or fraud within their agencies,” but contends that reporters’ solicitations for leaks and a guide to whistleblowing by The Washington Post is “bureaucratic partisanship” and warns it will backfire. Of federal workers and the mainstream media, Riddell writes, “you’d be hard-pressed to name two other intuitions ... who are more disliked by the American public. So yeah, team up. I’m sure it will turn out great.”

Rules/Regulations/Policy

Biofuel Credits Drop On Uncertainty, EPA Reaffirms RFS A Priority.

Reuters (1/25) reports that prices for US renewable fuel credits dropped to more than one-year lows on Wednesday, “extending the previous day’s slide on news of a government freeze that heightened uncertainty over the program.” The EPA is delaying 30 regulations, including implementation of 2017 biofuels requirements announced in November, which has “exacerbated the uncertainty of some in the biofuels industry as Trump seeks to install leaders who have criticized the program.” Chris Grundler, director of EPA’s Office of Transportation and Air Quality, on Wednesday cited recent comments from Scott Pruitt indicating “that he plans to operate the program as intended by Congress.”

Additional Reading.

- **House Prepares To Kill Coal, Methane Rules.** Greenwire. (1/25, Skibell)

Water

Flint Outlines Plans to Upgrade Water Infrastructure.

MLive (MI) (1/25) reports that Flint Mayor Karen Weaver detailed the city’s plans to spend \$100 million in federal funds to address water infrastructure upgrades, including plans to “replace water meters in every home and business in Flint.”

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